Sun Prairie Stronger:
An Overview of the July 10, 2018 Gas Explosion and Our Efforts to Recover and Rebuild
TIMELINE OF THE INCIDENT

- 6:20 PM: Initial Call for Service Received
  - Fire Department responded and began evacuation
- 7:00 PM: Explosion occurred
- 12:00 AM: Gas was turned off
  - Fire was allowed to continue to burn due to excess gas
OVERVIEW OF DOWNTOWN EXPLOSION

- 250+ residents evacuated prior to the incident
- 45+ residents displaced
- The explosion and subsequent fire destroyed or damaged several commercial and residential structures in the area
  - Many of the rental properties destroyed were our most affordable
LOCATING THE EMERGENCY COMMAND CENTER

Location changed four times within first 15-20 minutes
CITY RESOURCES INACCESSIBLE

- Public Works Facility
- Sun Prairie Utilities
- GIS/Maps
- Generators
- Equipment
- Fleet Vehicles
- Traffic Barricades
- No Dispatch
- Cliff Street Well
FIRST RESPONDERS

- Captain Cory Barr passed away as a result of his injuries
  - First Line of Duty Death in the history of the department
- Firefighter Ryan Welch was significantly injured
- Sergeant Ray Thompson (PD) was injured
SITE SAFETY
Pockets of gas in sanitary sewer
SITE SAFETY

• There was both significant and minor damage done to a number of buildings in the area
• Residents and owners were unable to return to their buildings until they were deemed structurally sound
SITE MANAGEMENT

- State Highway Detour
- Initial Security of area (State Troopers)
- Perimeter Fence
- Private Security
SITE INVESTIGATION

- State Fire Marshal
- DOJ/ Local Police
- Insurance Companies
- Utilities/Involved Parties
SITE SAFETY

• Private demolition and remediation
• Removal of Debris from roadway
• DNR Coordination
  • Asbestos
  • Air Quality
  • Lead Investigation
ASSESSMENT OF VISIBLE AND REPORTED DAMAGE

6 properties completely destroyed; Lost assessed value: $1.84 million (2017 valuation)

4 buildings with major damage (foundations, walls, multiple windows, etc.)

20 properties with minor damage (windows, cosmetic damage, etc.)
DOWNTOWN RECOVERY

• Fenced Area Reduced
• Building Inspection completed a rapid assessment of buildings to determine if they were at risk of collapsing or falling over
• Full structural assessments were the responsibility of the property owner
DOWNTOWN RECOVERY

Non-budgeted emergency costs to the City: $516,594
DOWNTOWN RECOVERY
WisDOT Intersection reconstruction cost: >$1 million
DOWNTOWN RECOVERY

Total amount of damage reported to City

Damage Assessment Survey: $768,000
ASSISTANCE
• The City received assistance from organizations across the State
  • DOT Secretary
  • Governor
  • DOT expedited reconstruction
• Emergency Response Assistance
  • Agencies responded from across the state
ASSISTANCE

• The American Red Cross was present for the initial emergency relief
• The Red Cross left after several days and Sunshine Place, our local human services nonprofit, stepped in to continue providing assistance to families and individuals in need
• The Bank opened a disaster relief fund for donations and also offered no interest loans to businesses who could not reopen for several days to weeks
DISASTER RELIEF FUND

Overview:
• Total amount raised: $614,266
• Fund disbursement overseen by community based committee
• Applications open from July 11th, 2018 to August 17th, 2018
• Businesses and property owners: $148,118 (18 applications)
• Displaced residents and employees: $220,000 (51 applications)
• Emergency responders: $141,000 (2 applications)*
  * Balance allocated to the Barr Family
• Funds allocated by September 10th, 2018
• Fund officially closed January 31st, 2019
DISASTER RELIEF FUND

Eligible Expenses:
• Insurance deductibles
• Minor clean-up costs
• Replacement of equipment
• Replacement of inventory
• Replacement of furniture and fixtures
• Repair and replacement of windows
• Repair and replacement of interior damage
• Repair and replacement of exterior damage
• Replacement of work uniforms
• Displacement of rental tenants
• Assistance with lost wages for companies due to evacuation
• Lost revenues due to evacuation

Ineligible Expenses:
• 100% coverage of demolition and clean-up expenses
• Recovery of Property Taxes Paid

Other Considerations:
• A cap of $20,000 per applicant
• Additional documentation may be requested prior to disbursement
SUN PRAIRIE STRONG

In one of the strongest testimonials as to just what #SunPrairieStrong means... Captain Cory Barr's memorial service was catered by volunteers from two of the hardest hit Downtown Sun Prairie businesses... Glass Nickel Pizza - Sun Prairie and Salvatore's Tomato Pies-Sun Prairie... just 5 days after the explosion.
RESILIENCY
The City of Sun Prairie has embarked on the creation of a vision and redevelopment plan for the corner of Main and Bristol, the site of the July 2018 gas leak and explosion.

The community’s sense of pride and incredible resiliency following the tragedy was represented by the #sunprairiestrong campaign. This process builds on that collective coming together to celebrate the heritage of the area and traditions of the community, as well as leverage this once-in-a-hundred-year opportunity to define the future of Sun Prairie.
MAIN & BRISTOL REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
MOVING FORWARD

• Finalize the Main & Bristol Redevelopment Plan (Nov. 2019)
• Create a new Downtown TIF District to replace the current district
• Coordinate other Downtown projects in the context of the redevelopment plans here
• Resurvey property owners for final damage assessment